

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 017937

FOR HARTMAN

FOLLOWING REPEAT VALLETTA 0100 ACTION SECSTATE 22 JANUARY 76.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 0100

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MT

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH MINOFF

REF: STATE 013395 AND PREVIOUS

1. JOE CAMILLERI, MINTOFF'S PRIVATE SECRETARY AND SECRETARY TO THE CABINET, CALLED ME AT HOME LATE ON JANUARY 21 TO CHECK THE DATES OF THE SECRETARY'S STOPS IN BRUSSELS AND MADRID LATER IN THE WEEK AND TO ASK IF A MEETING MIGHT BE ARRANGED IN ONE OF THOSE CITIES. I RESPONDED ALONG THE LINES OF REFTEL. CAMILLERI EXPRESSED HIS DISAPPOINTMENT AND SAID MINTOFF ATTACHED GREAT URGENCY TO A MEETING AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE.

2. CAMILLERI TELEPHONED AGAIN THIS MORNING, APOLOGIZED FOR CALLING SO LATE LAST NIGHT AND SAID MINTOFF HAD ASKED
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HIM TODO SO ONLY BECAUSE OF THE URGENCY HE ATTACHED TO

THE MEETING. HE SAID THEY WERE ALSO AWARE OF REPORTS OF A POSSIBLE TRIP TO AFRICA BY THE SECRETARY IN MARCH OR APRIL (I SAID I COULD NOT CONFIRM THOSE REPORTS) BUT THAT FROM MINTOFF'S POINT OF VIEW, "AFTER MADRID WOULD BE TOO LATE." I REPEATED THAT ALTHOUGH SERIOUS CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO ARRANGING SUCH A MEETING DURING THE PRESENT TRIP, THE EXTREMELY TIGHT SCHEDULE RULED IT OUT.

3. CAMILLERI SAID MINTOFF FEARED THAT WE DID NOT SUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATE THE URGENCY HE ATTACHED TO THE MEETING. WHEN I ASKED ABOUT THE REASONS FOR THE URGENCY, CAMILLERI RESPONDED THAT THE SECRETARY WAS ALREADY AWARE OF THE REASONS BECAUSE "THE ITALIANS AND GERMANS HAD EXPLAINED THEM TO HIM DIRECTLY". (THIS IS PRESUMABLY A REFERENCE TO THE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE DECEMBER NATO MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS.) I SAID I WOULD AGAIN CONVEY MINTOFF'S SENSE OF URGENCY TO THE DEPARTMENT.

4. COMMENT: MINTOFF CONTINUES TO OPERATE ON THE THEORY THAT "PERSISTENCE PAYS." I AGAIN GAVE CAMILLERI EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN THE "URGENCY" MINTOFF ATTACHED TO THE MEETING. HIS LAME REFERENCE INSTEAD TO CONVERSATIONS HE SECRETARY HAD WITH THE ITALIAN AND GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTERS OVER A MONTH AGO LEADS US TO THE CONCLUSION THAT OUR DEFINITION OF THE WORD "URGENCY" DIFFERS. WHILE WE REMAIN HOPEFUL THAT THE SECRETARY MIGHT SPARE HALF AN HOUR FOR MINTOFF ON SOME FUTURE TRIP TO EUROPE, WE ALSO RECOGNIZE THAT MINTOFF'S REASONS FOR WANTING THE MEETING ARE LARGELY SELF-SERVING. SMITH UNQUOTE SISCO

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